

This report is designed to enable health plans, the Medical Assistance Administration (MAA), and other organizations to monitor and evaluate the performance of Medicaid Healthy Options and statewide managed care programs in Washington State. Assessments were based on health care services and experiences of children enrolled in Healthy Options, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This report describes the background of the Medicaid Consumer Assessment of Health Plans (CAHPS) survey, the goals of the project, and how survey results may be interpreted by consumers, health plans, and other stakeholders.

Project Background

The CAHPS survey tools were developed under cooperative agreements among Harvard Medical School, the RAND Institute, the Research Triangle Institute, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. A version of CAHPS has been implemented in Washington State by MAA for six years. In the CAHPS Child survey, respondents provide information about their children's experiences with various aspects of medical care, including:

- Getting Needed Care
- Getting Care Quickly
- How Well Doctors Communicate
- Courteous and Helpful Office Staff
- Customer Service
- Overall Satisfaction Ratings

Additionally, children with chronic conditions (as determined by responses to the survey questions) were evaluated on six additional composites which comprise the Children with Chronic Conditions measurement set:

- Access to Prescription Medicines
- Access to Specialized Services
- Family Centered Care: Getting Needed Information
- Family Centered Care: Personal Doctor or Nurse Who Knows Child
- Family Centered Care: Shared Decision Making
- Coordination of Care

Questions related to children with chronic conditions were included to obtain important information from parents about their experiences with quality of care and services provided to their children with chronic conditions.

A copy of the survey instrument is available by calling Becky McAninch-Dake, CAHPS Coordinator at (360) 725-1622, or by sending an e-mail request to mcanibj@dshs.wa.gov. Trend data over the past six years are also available from Ms. McAninch-Dake.

Project Goals

The primary goal of the Medicaid CAHPS project is to provide timely and comparative information to clients to assist them in choosing a health plan. This information was collected through mail and telephone surveys that assessed clients' experiences with the health care system and the services they received through Healthy Options, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, and CHIP. This year's CAHPS survey results are included in the 2003 Medicaid client enrollment materials.

MAA's second goal is to provide performance feedback that will be used to improve Medicaid clients' outcomes and satisfaction. CAHPS results are being provided to health plans with the expectation that they will be integrated into comprehensive quality improvement initiatives at the health plan, provider group, and individual provider levels of the health care delivery system.